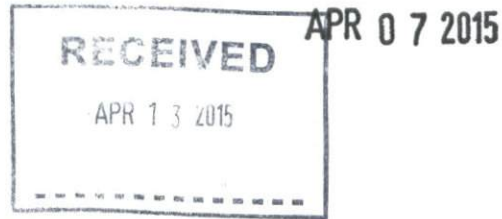




**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
Attn: Margo Young
Project Manager
U.S. EPA, Region 10
1200 6th Avenue, Suite 900, ETPA 20-1
Seattle, WA 98101



Re: FOIA DOC-NOAA-2015-000179

Dear Ms. Young:

Enclosed is a copy of a request for agency records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 USC 552, from Andrew J. Sloniewsky, Timothy Work, and Patricia Palacios of Steptoe & Johnson, LLP, addressed to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The request seeks the following:

- 1. All documents relating to or referencing a mining project in southwest Alaska sometimes called the Pebble project, the PLP mine project, or the Pebble Mine (the "Project"), or relating to or referencing any of the Project's associated features or any parties interested in developing the Project (Pebble Limited Partnership, Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd., etc.).*
- 2. All documents relating to or referencing a mineral deposit in southwest Alaska sometimes called the Pebble deposit or Pebble prospect (the "Deposit"), or relating to or referencing any of the Deposit's associated features or any parties interested in developing the Deposit (Pebble Limited Partnership, Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd., etc.).*
- 3. All documents relating to or referencing any plan or proposal to establish a mining project within the Bristol Bay watershed in southwest Alaska.*
- 4. All documents relating to or referencing any study undertaken, commissioned, or otherwise generated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ("NOAA"), including NOAA Fisheries and the National Marine Fisheries Service (together, "NMFS"), respecting salmon populations in the Bristol Bay watershed in southwest Alaska. **Specifically, clarification on December 3, 2014, to seek "all salmon studies except for those containing limited reference to the marine life history phase of salmon originating in the watersheds of Bristol Bay."***

As noted in Attachment A, the requests also include, without limitation, all documents referring or relating to any communications with Senator Mark Begich, including emails, letters, calendar entries, and call lists." **AND the*



Pebble project, PLP mine project, Pebble Mine, Pebble Limited Partnership, Northern Dynasty Minerals, the Pebble deposit, the Bristol Bay watershed, and any other entity or name listed in our FOIA request.

We found 160 documents that are the exclusive or primary concern of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. Accordingly, per our governing regulations, 15 CFR § 4.5(b), we hereby refer the requester to your agency for further action related to your agency's portion of the documents. You will find a copy of the final letter that was sent on behalf of NMFS.

Enclosed are the copies of the transferred documents with this letter on compact disk (CD). Be advised our agency released NMFS' portions of these documents in full. However, please be advised there are 2 documents that carry non responsive text and personal information withheld under exemption to (b)(6) that should be protected from disclosure. An index is provided, which you may find useful.

Please respond directly to the requester regarding these documents. We respectfully request you send us a copy of your agency transmittal letter to the following address:

NOAA Fisheries, Alaska Region
Attn: Ellen Sebastian
P.O.BOX 21668
Juneau, AK 99802

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions regarding this correspondence, please contact me at (907) 586-7152 or ellen.sebastian@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,



Ellen Sebastian
FOIA Coordinator, Alaska Region

Enclosures